

Testimony of Kelvin Roldán

Chief Institutional Advancement Officer  
Hartford Public Schools

Joint Committee on Planning and Development  
Connecticut General Assembly

Friday, March 7, 2014

Co-Chairs Senator Osten and Representative Rojas, Vice-Chairs Senator Cassano and Representative Fox, Ranking Members Senator Fasano and Rep. Amann, and distinguished members of the Planning and Development Committee.

For the record, my name is Kelvin Roldán, Chief Institutional Advancement Officer of Hartford Public Schools, and the former State Representative for the 4<sup>th</sup> Assembly District, Hartford.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you in support of H.B. 5347, An Act Allowing Certain Municipalities to Create Scholarship Funds Through Municipal Bonding.

I would like to thank Superintendent Kishimoto, Mayor Segarra and Hartford's business and philanthropic community for their incredible leadership and vision in getting us to this point. Our business and philanthropic leaders to date have committed \$4.1 million to make the dream of a college education a reality for thousands of children in Hartford.

This bill is fashioned after the successful Kalamazoo Promise in Michigan. In November 2005, Kalamazoo established the Kalamazoo Promise, an unrestricted scholarship program that guarantees a college scholarship to every graduate of Kalamazoo Public Schools. I visited Kalamazoo as recently as November of 2013. The impact has been staggering. Kalamazoo registered:

- Increases in enrollment and high school graduation;
- Reduction in dropout rates;
- Increases in college enrollment; and
- Increased economic development activity, including housing.

We believe this bill provides a unique opportunity for a public-private partnership. The private sector has organized to fund the program in Hartford and have a long-term commitment to ensuring the success of the program. The City of Hartford, under the leadership of Mayor Pedro Segarra and in partnership with Hartford Promise funders, is now seeking to match that commitment.

As you may know, this bill has appeared before this committee in the past with support from higher education institutions as well as members of the Hartford Delegation. It has

gone through the committee process, and passed the House of Representatives. Because of time constraints at the end of session, the Senate was not able to call the bill.

I want to make sure that members of the committee understand that the approach articulated in the body of the bill is a work in progress. We want to work with the committee to arrive at a workable solution. We look forward to working with you.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Kelvin Roldan